Master Gardeners of Ontario

What's growing on?

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Winter, 2009 **www.mastergardener.ca**

Oakville Group Hears About Green Roofs

David Oldacre, Oakville

Sean James, a member of the Oakville group, gave us a most interesting presentation on Green Roofs on October 16th. Sean, a graduate of the Niagara Parks School of Horticulture, is president of Fern Ridge Landscaping, and is a well known speaker in Southwestern Ontario. His talk focused on three major topics:

Sean James

There are three types of green roofs

Extensive Green Roofs or Ecoroofs - Typically with 8-15 cm. of soil depth they are ideal for the growth of drought-tolerant plants, particularly succulents like sedums which don't need irrigation and only little maintenance.

Intensive Green Roofs - usually more than 30 cm. for supporting shrub and tree growth. Examples are a roof top garden or a patio. They require a lot of maintenance.

Semi-intensive Green Roofs - usually 15-30 cm. deep. Shrubs, perennials, herbs and grasses can be used on semi-intensive roofs. Irrigation depends upon the plants used and the region.

A Typical Green Roof has six layers

roof deck, insulation, waterproofing; protection and storage layer; drainage and capillarity layer; roof permeable filter layer; extensive growing media; plants and vegetation.

Benefits include:

For the building owner - expands roof life by two to three times, reduces summer air conditioning cost and winter heat demand, helps storm water management, uses dead space as a garden.

For the community - reduces runoff, smog, noise, energy demand, improves air quality and aesthetics

For the environment - prevents combined sewer overflow, reduces carbon dioxide impact, helps neutralize acid rain effect, provides habitat for birds and insects.

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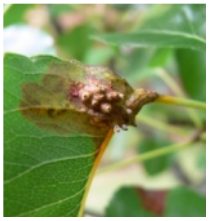
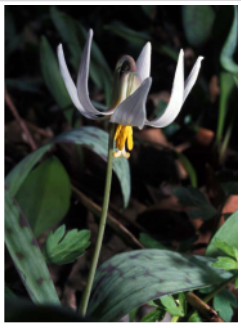
Pears in Peril

'How are your trees?' I asked the friendly farmer selling pears at my local Saturday market. 'Pretty bad,' he replied, shaking his head. 'We figure we have about two to three years before they're all so diseased that they have to be destroyed. And then, I guess we'll figure out something else to grow.'



To read the full article by Elizabeth Stewart from the Toronto Group on how Pear Trellis Rust is endangering pear trees go to our website at

www.mastergardener.ca



Mystery Plant

Do you know this plant? The answer will be revealed next issue.

Anne Saunders of the Brantford Group was first to identify last issue's plant as a Belamcanda, the Blackberry Lily belonging to the Iris family. It is hardy to about -20°C.

Green Roofs on the Net

For anyone interested in further information on green roofs, we have put links on the MGOI website. www.mastergardener.ca

Toronto Master Gardeners Learn about Trees

Dianne and Gary Westlake

Sean Fox

On November 4th we were invited to attend Toronto's meeting at the TBG. They have a number of innovative ideas including a job fair to help with explaining the jobs that they need to share, a method of recording MG volunteer hours each meeting, and a strong education program. We enjoyed a presentation by Sean Fox on 'Beautiful Trees for your Garden, from the Giants to the Dwarfs'.

Canada Blooms

We hope to see you all at the show!

Plants for Green Roofs

Susanne Spence Wilkins, West Elgin

Choosing plants for green roofs is no different than selecting plants for your garden. You will use the same design skills as you evaluate the growing conditions. Unless your building is located in dense shade, it will be a hot, dry, severe climate that is subject to large amounts of moisture, wind and, most of the time, sun.

If you can imagine the plants that would thrive in this climate at ground level, then you can begin to make your planting plans for your green roof.

The first plants that come to mind are low growing sedums and other tough succulents. They have the great qualities of sustaining themselves attractively in tough drought conditions, but they also quickly absorb large amounts of water after rain. These plants are also quick spreaders, reducing your planting costs. Look for some of the colourful leaved varieties such as the vibrant golden Sedum rupestre 'Angelina' or the soft green of Sedum acre.

Thyme also provides the quick covering qualities required for green roofs as well as a variety of flower colours and leaf tones. Veronica repens (Creeping Speedwell) is also a good choice.

If there are areas of your roof that are protected from wind, you can also consider some taller growing species. This will give your roof top garden more interest throughout the year. Tough plants to

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MG List-serv Avalon Hamlin - hamlin@ebtech.net
Newsletter Dianne & Gary Westlake - editor@mastergardener.ca

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Provincial Administrator Charlotte Vorstermans cvorstermans@rogers.com
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Provincial Field Advisor Edythe Falconer edythelf@netscape.ca
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Soil Workshop in Kemptville

Edythe Falconer, Ottawa-Carleton

A workshop on soil was my first introduction to EFAO, the Ecological Farmers Association of Ontario. I was even able to sit in on one of their business meetings. Although I was there to refresh and add to my knowledge of soil, it was still interesting to find that EFAO faces many of the same challenges as MGOI, like financial sustainability. Ecological sustainability is their core concern, and since soil is the basis of successful farming, this workshop addressed the complicated matter of how to keep it healthy and productive over long periods of time.

Ken Laing, an ecological farmer for 30 years in the St. Thomas area, and a scientist talked about pH and how it affects various crops. We discussed the importance of an adequate level of organic matter in soil (the best manure is poultry!) and how to increase CEC (cation exchange capacity). We also dealt with the importance of micro-nutrients, how and when and to apply them, and the best ways of insuring adequate accessible phosphorus.

It is one thing to have book knowledge on the science of soil. It is quite another to hear from its practitioners on how they put the science into their fields. It was a day well spent!

Master Gardeners in Action

Lanark County Fun Project

Every year, we try to do a "fun project" just for us. In the past, we have grown different types of Geraniums and Rudbeckias. This year, we grew types of squash with varied levels of success. One was rototilled out by an enthusiastic spouse. At our annual November Pot Luck, we all brought dishes made from our squash. Casseroles, desserts and breads were featured.

Windsor-Essex

Albert St. Pierre attended the Ridgetown course on propagation and will be making a presentation to the group in March.

Oakville Talks

The Oakville Group has lined up the following talks for next year: How to Make an Effective Presentation, Invasive Species, Attracting Pollinators to your Garden. They are also holding a design workshop in early April. Members of other MGOI groups are always welcome.

Plants for Green Roofs continued from page 2

consider for this growing area are *Liatris spicata* (Gayfeather), *Lavendula angustifola* (Lavender), *Rudbeckia* 'Goldstrum' (Black-Eyed Susan), *Sedum spectabile* 'Autumn Joy' and 'Neon', *Echinacea* (Coneflower), *Coreopsis lanceolata* and *Allium schoenoprasum* (Chives).

When planting the roof top, use your creativity to create an attractive garden space. Planting in large drifts of colour and paying attention to flowering times and colour are important to the overall effect of the rooftop garden.

This planting area will provide building insulation and outside air purification, but as gardeners we know that they can also be beautiful.

Coordinators' Conference

Paul Zammit entertains the troops at the Coordinators' Conference.

The conference was a great success with group discussions and presentations by Kelly Noel on the revised Coordinators' Manual, Linda Hugli on education, Ron Rossini on recruitment, retention and recognition. Paul Zammit delivered a serious message that the Garden Centres are having to include more 'lifestyle' merchandise as well as plants to remain competetive.

Revenue for MGOI

The Revenue Development Committee

At the AGM in August, our 2009 budget was approved, which included a fundraising target of $16,815. As of December 13th, we are pleased to report that we have raised $9,024 towards our goal. This is a combination of corporate donations, donations "in kind" from board members as well as donations from you, our Master Gardeners, in response to our request in early December. We did receive many comments on our first fundraising attempt, and we have tried to respond to all feedback. We realise this is new for us, and that not all agree with what we are trying to do. Our reality is, however, that we need to raise funds in order to provide a reasonable level of service to our Master Gardeners across the province. Thank you to those that have responded to our appeal, and we hope to recognize you more appropriately in a future newsletter.

The E-Trillium Express!

To receive your own electronic version of each issue of the OHA's Trillium newsletter, contact Linda Hugli with your email address at editor@gardenontario.org. The OHA also has a Conservation Site with many useful tips.

Mg-List Changes

When you reply on the mg-list, your message now goes to the whole list.

Don't miss out on interesting discussions. Contact Avalon Hamlin to sign up.

You Can Get MG Hours Anywhere!

John Hethrington, Mississauga

Many of us have had the experience of being a Master Gardener while we are away from our home base. On a cruise ship on the Yangtze River, passing through the Three Gorges, our table mates at dinner were a couple from Wasaga Beach. It's a small world. When I mentioned that I was a Master Gardener, for an hour, I answered a flood of questions about their garden at home and almost missed the Three Gorges.

Events

January 10, 2009 - Technical Update 'The Global Gardener – Gardening in a Changing Climate' at the Toronto Botanical Garden. casey.vanandel@sympatico.ca

March 1, 2009 – A Day in the Garden at the Guelph Turfgrass Institute on Victoria Road in Guelph

March 18-22, 2009 - Canada Blooms, Toronto Convention Centre

April 2, 2009 - at 7:30pm at the Algonquin Theatre in Huntsville. Speaker is Martin Galloway on "A Healthy Approach"

April 3, 4, 5 2009 - Home & Garden Show, Thunder Bay

April 4, 2009 -The Elgin County Master Gardeners will be presenting 'Digging in the Dirt', a day of informative and fun Indoor Seminars at 9:00 a.m. at Knox Presbyterian Church $5.00. Bring a bag lunch, refreshments will be provided. info 519-773-9621

April 9,10,11, 2009 - Peterborough Garden Show - www.peterboroughgardens.ca - $5

May 9, 2009 Guelph and Wellington MG's Plant Sale at the Turf Grass Institute.

May 9, 2009 - Design Seminar for Gardeners - Julie Weisenhorn and Jim Calkins. $15.00 Info 705-645-0004

May 9-10, 2009 - Propagation Clinic (not an official MG course but similar to the one planned last year), St Clair College Windsor $262.50 lunch included - info 519-972-2711

July 10, 2009 - MGOI AGM at the OHA Convention, Trent University, Peterborough

July 10, 11, 12, 2009 - OHA Convention at Trent University, Peterborough

October 17, 2009 - Coordinators Conference. L.O., Milton

Milestones

New MGiTs
Niagara - Tricia Golob, Shirley Uyesugi and Linda Wade.

United Counties – Angie Bernard, Mark Daniher, and Sylvie Dirk

Oakville - Pierce Andrews

Ottawa Carleton - Catherine Disley-Engler and Julianne Labreche.

New MGs
Ottawa Carleton - Gina Dobrodzicka and Diane McClymont-Peace

Completed the Certification Exam
United Counties – Mark Daniher

Halton Region - June Wright

5 Years
Ottawa Carleton - David Hinks, Heather Lee, Ruth Martin, Kelly Noel, Mary Reid, Nancy Seppala, and Kathleen Teahen.

Thunder Bay - Wyoma Fauconnier, Sylvia Goodheart, Cathie Nichols, Aino Plumridge, Lina Rintamaki, Carole Rumpel, Donna Russell, Gordon Ward and Karen Breukelman.

10 Years
Thunder Bay - Linda Adamson, Hazel Baxter, Harriet Hansen, Lynda Lahteenmaa, Louise Nadeau, Erika North, Ann Roddy, Eliose Rodger

15 Years
Peterborough – Rachel Burrows

Emeritus
Windsor - Evelyn Kogel

In Memoriam:
Ottawa Carleton – Gerry Channer

Thunder Bay - Peggy Tripp